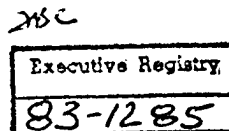


ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 7, 1983

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Mr. William J. Casey
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.

Dear Bill,

I would like you to look personally at the attached item, which is the Secret portion of the discussion of the Soviet February 8 small ICBM test, a possible violation of SALT II restrictions, in the March 2 National Intelligence Daily. We are both lawyers. I would ask you what you would guess the attached item is if you saw it in the course of your legal practice. I would guess that you would say it is a lawyer's brief on behalf of the Soviet Union in some legal proceeding where they are accused of violating the SALT II limits. It is strange to find this kind of discussion emanating from the Central Intelligence Agency.

I will not deal at any length with the technical issues involved in this analysis, because others are more competent to deal with them, and it is hard to discuss them at this level of classification. Let me mention, however, two of these issues in passing. My understanding is that all of the intelligence agencies are agreed that the ratio of RV weight to PRV weight in this test was substantially less than 50%. But a little known provision of SALT II requires that in these circumstances the ratio of RV to PBV should be greater than 50%. This issue, which might seem to involve the likeliest violation of SALT II limits in this test, is not even discussed in the NID item. Second, the notion that the present missile can be considered as a modernization of the SS-13, as argued in the NID, is extremely strange. The SS-13 is a Soviet missile deployed in 1968, developed by a different design bureau, and deployed only with 60 launchers. Most students of the Soviet strategic posture believe the SS-13 was deployed in such small numbers because it was unsuccessful. To argue that the present missile can be understood as a modernization of a failed development effort of twenty years ago is thus even stranger than it would be for us to argue that the forthcoming B-1 bomber is a modernization of the old B-52. Perhaps one could argue such a thing within the legal technicalities of SALT II, in spite of the disparity in throwweight between the SS-13 and the

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new missile. But it is a very forced argument, and the NID item, by omitting well known facts about the SS-13, blinds the non-specialist reader to the peculiar character of such an argument.

In the arms control community, the distinction between monitoring and verification has long been established. Monitoring is held to constitute the reporting of facts about Soviet behavior, without drawing conclusions as to whether they are violations of treaties. Verification on the other hand is the complicated process of drawing such conclusions. We have a highly structured inter-agency mechanism for verification, and in the important cases it is you and the other members of the Cabinet, and the President, who must make a final decision on whether a given action constitutes a violation of Soviet commitments. This NID item seems to present the Cabinet and the President with prejudgments about matters which can only be decided at the highest political level, and to arrive at legal judgments on the meaning of specific provisions of the arms control treaties we have negotiated.

Finally, even if drawing conclusions on verification and compliance were the designed mission of the intelligence community, this cannot be done adequately in the one page provided by the National Intelligence Daily. To draw a conclusion upon such a complex, vitally important, and highly charged issue in this off-hand manner strikes me as inappropriate.

I write to you only in my personal capacity, and not as the expression of a State Department position. But I feel that I have to write to you, because I was deeply troubled by this item in the NID, which not only goes beyond the NID's function by attempting to decide a policy debate within the USG, but attempts to decide it in the manner most advantageous to the USSR. The March 2 NID item was a particularly striking case, but it is only one example of a persistent tendency toward partisan advocacy in analysis of Soviet arms control compliance. Knowing your own strong views on these matters, I hope that you will be willing to undertake a review of what the intelligence community has been saying on this vitally important issue.

Sincerely yours,



Elliott Abrams
Human Rights and
Humanitarian Affairs

cc: Hugh Montgomery

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